

That is a vision that Republicans share, and it is what we are committed to fighting for on behalf of the American people. That is another reason we are committed to maintaining limited government, because the bigger government grows, the more that vision of opportunity and prosperity shrinks.

And so Speaker PELOSI is partially right. She is wrong to dismiss the bill's pricetag, because it is profoundly—profoundly—irresponsible to mortgage our children's and grandchildren's futures with a massive government spending increase, but she is right in that it is about values.

Now, Republicans aren't opposing Democrats' tax-and-spending spree simply because it spends a lot of money, but because it advances a vision of government with which we profoundly disagree. We don't believe that the American dream is government dependence; we don't believe in an ever-expanding role for the Federal Government; and we don't believe that bureaucrats in Washington are a good substitute for the judgment of the American people.

That is why every Republican in the Senate will be voting against the Democrats' reckless spending legislation, not just because it spends too much money, but because it fundamentally undermines the American tradition of liberty and limited government. It is about values, and it is about visions, and Republicans do not share the Democrats' vision of a future of Big Government and Big Brother.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be able to conclude my remarks before the scheduled rollcall vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RUSSIA

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I rise today to continue the discussion that we have been having about the harms of Nord Stream 2.

I will discuss in this speech one of the administration's legal responsibilities, in particular to impose sanctions in a way that they are now defying those legal responsibilities.

I do want to note that every day brings new evidence of the incoherence of President Biden's sellout and surrender to Vladimir Putin. Since we last discussed this, elections have occurred in Germany and the government of Angela Merkel, on whose behalf the Biden administration claims to be acting, will now be replaced. So the entire surrender to Russia by Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS was for nothing. I will discuss that further throughout the day and throughout the week.

We have heard repeatedly from my Democratic colleagues that my actions to block some of President Biden's nominees are unprecedented. That accusation doesn't stand up to scrutiny. Senators routinely use their preroga-

tives, and, indeed, Democrats regularly engaged in massive obstruction over months and years of President Trump's nominations. What isn't unprecedented, however, is Joe Biden's open defiance and literal lawlessness in not imposing the sanctions mandated by multiple laws passed overwhelmingly by Congress.

Right now, I would like to talk about one of the laws that the President is violating: CAATSA—the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act. Before getting into the details of Nord Stream 2, I would like to note a couple of things about CAATSA.

First, CAATSA was explicitly designed for the purpose of taking away the President's discretion whether or not to impose sanctions on Russia in cases where Congress had deemed it necessary to mandate them. And secondly, on that basis, CAATSA passed Congress with nearly unanimous support: 419 to 3 in the House, and 98 to 2 in the Senate.

As for the purpose of CAATSA, I would like to quote some of my colleagues from the other side of the aisle who were both clear and celebratory about the bill.

Senator MURPHY, who has been particularly loquacious in opposition to these holes, said about CAATSA: "It is not often that Congress takes away, from the president, discretionary powers on foreign policy."

Worth remembering.

Senator SCHUMER, who has also had more than a little bit to say on these holes, said that CAATSA was necessary because of what he described as the President's "seeming inability to deal with the many transgressions of Russia."

Gosh, Senator SCHUMER was right. We now have a President unwilling and unable to deal with, as he put it, the "many transgressions of Russia."

What about Senator MENENDEZ?

Senator MENENDEZ has stood on this floor, including at 4:00 and 5:00 and 6:00 in the morning, railing about these blocks.

Well, what did he say about CAATSA?

He said that CAATSA sent "the most powerful message in the world, that the United States—Democrats, Republicans, and Independents—stand together."

Those were really fine sentiments. I wish they held true when there was a Democratic President as much as Senator MENENDEZ believed them when there was a Republican President.

And how about Senator DURBIN?

Senator DURBIN is never lacking an opinion on any topic. Here is what he said: "We had to tell them enough is enough, and when it came to the sanctions and trusting the president, we basically said we want to make sure the president will not lift these sanctions."

Well, do you know what? Senator MURPHY was right. Senator SCHUMER was right. Senator MENENDEZ was right. Senator DURBIN was right. That

is why Congress came together to pass CAATSA, tough legislation to prevent a President from doing what Joe Biden is doing right now: surrendering to Putin, surrendering to Russia, ignoring U.S. law, and giving Putin a multibillion-dollar gift.

And, when my Democratic colleagues didn't believe the Trump administration was implementing the full breadth of mandatory sanctions under CAATSA, they made the purpose of CAATSA even clearer.

On January 30, 2018, Senator CARDIN led a letter about CAATSA to then-Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, cosigned by 21 other Democrats—almost half of the caucus. They said that the Trump administration's failure to impose mandatory sanctions "do not fully reflect the clear congressional intent described in the legislation . . . We expect the administration to provide a full explanation as to why it has not imposed mandatory sanctions" under several provisions of CAATSA.

Then, on May 18, 2018, Senator MENENDEZ led a letter about CAATSA to several inspectors general, cosigned by two other Democrats. They said that "[s]everal mandatory provisions of the law have not been implemented . . . despite strong evidence that actions taken by or on behalf of the Russian government are in violation of the CAATSA sanctions law."

In fact, I would like to read more of that letter because it is so abundantly clear about the purpose of CAATSA:

In light of the apparent violations and the lack of corresponding sanctions actions, we are concerned about whether the sanctions implementation process within the administration is fulfilling CAATSA's mandate and intent. In general, with respect to mandatory measures, the President is required to make determinations in the event he has established that sanctions behavior has taken place, and then either impose sanctions or exercise a waiver.

So a binary choice: One or the other. That is what of a President is required.

And do you know what? Senator CARDIN and Senator MENENDEZ, well, they might have meant it, but they didn't say it: Only Republican Presidents are required to do this.

They didn't write that in their letters because, of course, CAATSA doesn't say that. What they said is a President is required to make that choice. The law requires the President to make that choice.

Senator CARDIN was right. Senator MENENDEZ was right. And Joe Biden is telling them: Go jump in a lake.

He is telling the U.S. Congress: Go jump in a lake.

He is telling the American people: Go jump in a lake.

He is cutting a deal with Putin, and don't bring no stinkin' laws to get in his way.

That brings to us Nord Stream 2. One of the provisions that my Democratic colleagues cited in both of those letters was section 228: "Sanctions with respect to certain transactions with foreign sanctions evaders and serious

human rights abusers in the Russian federation.”

Section 228 mandates the imposition of sanctions on any company that conducts any “significant transactions,” including “deceptive transactions,” for Russian companies that are already sanctioned.

There is no doubt—zero—that the company Nord Stream 2 AG, which is the company responsible for the planning, the construction, and the eventual operation of Putin’s Nord Stream 2 Pipeline, has committed acts that require the implementation and the imposition of those mandated sanctions under CAATSA 228.

Indeed, that is one of the many reasons the pipeline was halted for a year, and Putin only began building it again on January 24 of this year—4 days after Joe Biden was sworn in. Because Joe Biden has been so weak on this issue, because the pipeline exists only as a gift from Biden to Putin, this pipeline is, in a very real sense, the Biden-Putin pipeline.

We know that the Biden administration is defying the law, because the Biden administration told us so in May. The Biden administration sent a report to Congress describing how Nord Stream 2 AG had conducted deceptive transactions for sanctioned Russian companies. That is the explicit trigger in CAATSA for sanctions, and yet the Biden administration has refused to meet its obligations under CAATSA, and that leads to the reasonable compromise that I have offered.

For several months, I have had in place a hold on all State Department nominees and on several Treasury Department nominees as well. The reason for the hold has been simple—because Joe Biden is defying the law and is giving Vladimir Putin a multibillion-dollar gift that constitutes a generational geopolitical blunder that puts billions of dollars into the Russian coffers every year that Putin will use for military aggression against America and our allies. Biden’s surrender to Putin weakens Europe profoundly. It makes Europe dependent on Russia even more so for energy and subject to Russia’s energy blackmail. And it also, on top of that, destroys jobs here in the United States.

For months, I have had in place the blanket hold that has caused increasing cries of pain and dismay from our Democratic colleagues. Interestingly, these same Democratic colleagues all agree that what Biden is doing with the Biden-Putin pipeline is terrible. Almost to a person, the Democrats who are complaining about this have denounced Joe Biden for giving Putin this multibillion-dollar gift, but they say they want to confirm his nominees anyway.

So what I have said is: All right. Fine. If the Biden administration wants to defy the sanctions law that I drafted—the Cruz-Shaheen sanctions law, it is two different bills that I drafted with Senator SHAHEEN, Demo-

crat from New Hampshire. We passed into law, overwhelming bipartisan support from both Houses of Congress. If Joe Biden wants to ignore those laws, then there is another avenue to resolve much of this dispute, which is simply to follow the law under CAATSA.

So I extended an offer to Secretary Blinken, to Secretary Yellen, to the White House that I would lift my holds on every career State nominee and on the Treasury nominees where I placed holds in exchange for one of two things: No. 1, the best outcome would be for the Biden administration to actually implement CAATSA and sanction Nord Stream 2 AG, to follow the law, to do what is mandatory.

That would be the best outcome. If they did so, I would immediately lift my holds.

But, secondly, I get that the White House politically has decided they want to surrender to Putin on this. My understanding is there is an inter-agency process—the State Department argued to do the right thing. The State Department argued: Impose the sanctions on Nord Stream 2 AG, stop this pipeline, which, by the way, is what Tony Blinken sat in my office and promised State would do. It is what just about every senior nominee to the State Department has promised they would do.

State argued to do the right thing, but according to public reports, the political operatives at the White House overruled their own State Department. They said: Never mind the national security interests of the United States. Never mind protecting America. Never mind stopping Putin and Russia. Never mind protecting Europe’s energy security. Never mind protecting Europe from blackmail by Putin. We want to surrender because Angela Merkel wants us to.

I talked last week about how a friend of mine jokes that the White House political team sleeps with votive candles of Angela Merkel under their beds. There is a view in the White House that what Merkel wants, Merkel gets, even if it is bad for America, bad for Germany, bad for Europe, but good for Russia.

Of course, Merkel is on her way out now, but they still want to do this surrender. And this surrender, by the way, if it is completed, will hurt America for generations to come—10 years, 20 years, 30 years from now.

The next Russian dictator will be enriched by Joe Biden’s surrender to Putin on the Biden-Putin pipeline.

The two options: First, after imposing sanctions, they could leave them in place. But, secondly, recognizing that they don’t want to do it, there is a second option I gave them, which is that they could impose sanctions under CAATSA, but then they could delist Nord Stream 2 AG.

In other words, they could exercise the political decision not to impose the sanctions. That gives them their policy—preferred policy outcome.

What it also does under CAATSA is it triggers an automatic congressional override vote.

So I told Secretary Blinken, I told Secretary Yellen: It is very easy. If you believe in this foolhardy policy of surrendering to Putin, then put your money where your mouth is. Follow the law, which is clear, unequivocal, black letter law. Impose the sanctions. And you do have a vehicle. You can delist it. The President can make a determination that even though the sanctions are mandatory, he wants to delist it.

But here is what Congress did. In CAATSA, it triggered an automatic congressional override vote. And what I have told the administration is: You know what. Whether I win or lose that override vote, if you actually follow the law in such a way that it triggers that vote, I will lift my holds—my holds on the career State nominees, my holds on the Treasury nominees. You have a path. Simply subject yourself to congressional oversight.

Now, it is very clear why they haven’t taken this offer, which has been in writing for months now. Because Joe Biden thinks if we had a vote in this Senate, he would lose. He thinks if we had a vote in the House, he would lose. He knows that Republicans would vote against him.

And if Democrats had a modicum of consistency, virtually every Democrat in this Chamber and the House has been unequivocal that the Nord Stream 2 Pipeline is devastating to U.S. national security. And so the Biden White House doesn’t want to risk members of his own party voting against his surrender to Russia. So, instead, they defy the law. That is an irresponsible course of action.

There is a very reasonable compromise on the table, and all of the perils the Democrats are lamenting about these holds can be avoided if, if, if Joe Biden will simply follow the law, follow CAATSA. The mandatory sanctions that Democrats explained were designed to prevent a President from doing what Joe Biden is doing right now, which is surrendering to Russia. There is a reasonable compromise on the table. All that is required is for Joe Biden to take it.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON NOMINATION OF KAREN ERIKA DONFRIED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Donfried nomination?

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 73, nays 26, as follows: